

**Statement of Senator Alan Nunnelee**  
**Chairman, Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee**

**June 2, 2004**

“Mississippi’s Constitution is crystal clear on what the Legislature can consider during a Special Session. The reauthorization of DHS is the only public health matter before us during this Special Session. Unfortunately, Medicaid is not. As a Senate Chairman who must respect the Constitution, I am bound by what is in a governor’s special session call and not by a ruling of the Speaker of the House.

I do not intend to let some in this Legislature play politics with Mississippi’s Department of Human Services. There are only 28 days left before 650,000 needy Mississippians will be without vital services. This is the most immediate health care crisis in Mississippi at this time. My hope is to reauthorize the Department of Human Services like this Legislature should have last month.

Governor Barbour has said that he will veto any DHS reauthorization that revisits the PLADS issue. That means that DHS would not be authorized if the invalid House action is left to stand. If the Senate and the House want the

Governor to add PLADS to the Special Session call they should look to the Governor's Office and not the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee.

The Senate and the House have both spoken on the PLADS issue. The Senate voted 43 to 8 in favor of the Medicaid Reform legislation on May 7. The House voted 82 to 32 in favor of the Medicaid Reform legislation on May 7.

The FY '05 budget is already written. The only way to add \$40 million to the Medicaid budget to pay for PLADS would be to cut other Medicaid services; raid the tobacco trust fund even further; or cut public education or highways. The Legislature has already made their choice, just like the 49 other states which have made similar changes to their Medicaid programs.

I urge my friends in the House to quickly reauthorize DHS like the Senate has done. Such action would save 100% of our DHS recipients, while we begin our work to assist the 6% of our Medicaid recipients who this Legislature voted to move from Medicaid to Medicare coverage."

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